RELATED ISSUE 4

To what extent should individuals and groups in Canada embrace a national identity?

Key Issue
To what extent should we embrace nationalism?

Related Issue 1
To what extent should nation be the foundation of identity?

Related Issue 2
To what extent should national interest be pursued?

Related Issue 3
To what extent should internationalism be pursued?

Related Issue 4
To what extent should individuals and groups in Canada embrace a national identity?

Chapter 13

Visions of Canada

To what extent have visions of Canadian identity evolved?

What is Canada?

How and why did early visions of Canada emerge?

To what extent did various early visions of Canada meet people's needs?

How is the evolution of various visions of Canada reflected in the country today?

Chapter 14

Canadian Identity

To what extent have attempts to promote national identity been successful?

How have symbols and myths been used to promote a national identity?

How have institutions been used to promote a national identity in Canada?

How can government programs and initiatives be used to promote a national identity?

How can individuals promote a national identity?

Chapter 15

The Quest for Canadian Unity

To what extent should Canadian national unity be promoted?

What is national unity?

How does the nature of Canada affect national unity?

How has the changing face of Canada affected national unity?

Chapter 16

Visions of National Identity

To what extent should I embrace a national identity?

What are some possible visions of nation?

What are some possible visions of Canada?

What is your vision of national identity?

The Big Picture

As you explored the first three related issues, you developed understandings of the concepts of identity, nation, nation-state, nationalism, and internationalism. In the process, you may have come to understand that you are a member of at least one nation — and perhaps several.

Some experts in fields such as political philosophy and history take a dim view of nationalism, arguing that contending nationalist loyalties cause much of the conflict in the world as nation struggles against nation. Those who hold this view believe that nationalism is a negative force that leads to an us-versus-them worldview.

Others view nationalism more positively. They argue that a sense of nation and nationalism creates bonds among people and that these bonds foster security and well-being. From this base, they argue, nations can develop, prosper, and confidently play a role in world affairs, offering aid, expertise, and a model for other nations to follow.

No matter which vision of nation and nationalism you subscribe to, nationalism affects your life. In Canada, many nations coexist, though their goals sometimes conflict. Some nations are even dedicated to changing the country's structure. For Canada and Canadians, this diversity presents both challenges and opportunities — and you will explore some of these as you progress through this related issue.

Lester B. Pearson, a former prime minister and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, identified these challenges and opportunities when he said that Canadians have choices: "whether we live together in confidence and cohesion; with more faith and pride in ourselves and less self-doubt and hesitation; strong in the conviction that the destiny of Canada is to unite, not divide; sharing in co-operation, not in separation or in conflict; respecting our past and welcoming our future."

The chart on the previous page shows how you will progress through Related Issue 4. As you explore this related issue, you will come to appreciate that

- developing a national identity is a process with a past, a present, and a future
- national identity is complex and multi-faceted
- people have differing visions of their national identity
- these differing visions affect the way people view their nation and nationalism

Your explorations in this related issue will challenge you to develop your own understandings of the complexities of nationalism in Canada — and to decide the extent to which you wish to embrace nationalism.

Your Challenge

Participate in a four-corners debate that discusses, analyzes, and evaluates responses to the question for this related issue: To what extent should individuals and groups in Canada embrace a national identity?

You will then work with the class to build a consensus in response to the key course question: To what extent should we embrace nationalism?

Checklist for Success

Use this checklist to ensure that you are well-prepared for the debate.

My Knowledge and Understanding

☑ My criteria for judgment show my understanding of the issue.

☑ My criteria for judgment are clearly explained.

☑ My opening position is based on my criteria.

☑ My arguments are thoughtful and based on sound evidence.

My Selection, Analysis, and Evaluation of Information

☑ My information is drawn from a variety of sources.

☑ My evidence is relevant, valid, reliable, and free of bias.

☑ My evidence shows that I have considered a variety of points of view and perspectives.

☑ My sources and references are cited correctly and accurately.

My Presentation of My Position

☑ I support my position with graphics and other material.

☑ I listen carefully and respond thoughtfully to new ideas.

☑ I am prepared to change my position as new ideas and logical challenges are presented.

A Four-Corners Debate

As you progress through the four chapters of this related issue, you will develop understandings of, as well as opinions and ideas about, the extent to which individuals and groups in Canada should embrace a national identity. These ideas, along with the notes you have been keeping in your journal on nationalism, will help you prepare to take part in a four-corners debate on this statement:

Individuals and groups should embrace a national identity.

Before the debate begins, you will see four signs — Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree — posted in the four corners of the classroom. These signs indicate levels of agreement and disagreement with the debate statement.

At the beginning, you will take a position under the sign that best represents your opening position on the debate statement — and you will have an opportunity to present evidence and arguments to persuade others to support your position. You will also have an opportunity to listen to, consider, and ask questions about the views of others, as well as to decide whether their arguments are convincing enough to persuade you to change your position.

Your teacher will explain the debate procedure in more detail.

Preparing for the Debate

At the end of each chapter, you will have an opportunity to think about and start preparing the material needed to complete this challenge.

As you progress through the chapters, think about criteria you can use to guide your choice of an initial informed position. Basing your decision on strong, insightful criteria will help you develop and defend your position on the debate statement. It will also help you ask and answer powerful questions, listen thoughtfully and respectfully to the ideas of others, and evaluate and respond to the informed positions of others.

Steps to Your Challenge

Step 1

To prepare an informed position on an issue, it is important to analyze the issue and try to understand the relationships between the parts and the whole. Examine the parts of the debate statement. Who, for example, are "individuals" and "groups"? Does this refer to all Canadians, to the members of a particular nation within Canada, to the students in your classroom — or to some other individuals and groups? And what does the word "embrace" mean? Does it mean complete acceptance of a particular view? Does it allow for critical thought?

In developing your informed position, you will explain your understanding of the various aspects of the debate statement. These understandings will affect the criteria you develop, the judgment you reach, and the way you approach the debate statement.

Step 2

Develop a starting position. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the debate statement? The ideas you encounter as you progress through this related issue and those you have recorded in your journal, as well as the criteria you develop, will help you arrive at a position — and decide whether you need to carry out additional research before deciding what position to take. You should also choose graphics and other materials to help support your position.

When the debate begins, you will be asked to move to the area of the classroom with the sign that best represents your position. The number of students taking each position will be counted.

Step 3

Present your position — and be prepared to answer questions and to listen as others present their position.

During the debate, you will have an opportunity to change your position. Be prepared to identify the arguments that persuaded you to stick with your original position or make a change.

Step 4

When the debate concludes, stay with the group under the sign that represents your final position. With this group, extend your discussion to develop a consensus on the key course issue: To what extent should we embrace nationalism?

Develop a statement that summarizes your consensus and record this on the chalkboard or a sheet of chart paper. Then work with the class to achieve consensus on the same issue. If achieving consensus is not possible, develop a statement that reflects the majority and minority views on the issue.

Step 5

On the basis of the statement you developed in Step 4, decide as a class whether this course provided you with the information and opportunities necessary to develop an informed response to the key course-issue question. If you would recommend changes, explain what these would be.

Challenge Tips

To get the most out of a four-corners debate, consider these pointers.

Listen Actively	Think Critically	Participate Respectfully
Make notes about what others say so that you can fine-tune your response.	Be open to the idea of changing your opinion when you encounter valid evidence and sound arguments.	Be willing to accept that others believe in their position as strongly as you believe in yours.
Deconstruct key phrases and ideas presented by others to ensure that you understand their message.	Be strong-willed enough to maintain a position you believe in without being stubborn.	Be open to new ideas and extend to others the same respect you expect.
Treat disagreement as an opportunity to learn about other points of view and perspectives that you can build on.	Be aware of your own biases.	Be willing to explore new ideas. Be careful to focus on the ideas, not the person.